CHANCEL OF BARFRESTON CHURCH.

BARFRESTON CHURCH, KENT.

The secluded village of Barfreston has obtained celebrity for the very early and curious church erected there, and which was, by some writers on architecture, once considered to be of Anglo-Saxon workmanship, but which has been more correctly appropriated to the Norman period, from the general resemblance its details bear to those exhibited in undoubted Norman erections. It is a small structure, dedicated to St. Mary, and consists only of a nave and chancel, which communicate with each other by a semicircular arch, rising from columns, and richly sculptured. These columns are ornamented with an angular fret or wreathing, and with capitals derived from the Corinthian order. On each side of the grand arch are two smaller ones, which are not perforated, and their use is not very certain. At the east end of the chancel are three round-headed windows, very deeply splayed and enriched above with foliated sculpture. Above them is a circular window, also richly decorated. The entire length of the interior is 46 ft. 6 in., the width of the nave, 16 ft. 8 in., and that of the chancel, 13 ft. 6 in. The walls are about 2 ft. 9 in. thick. The roof is higher in the nave than in the chancel, the difference being about 5 ft.

Of the exterior features, the most striking is the grand south door, the arch, tympan, and capitals of which are most richly and elaborately sculptured, with various fanciful figures, producing a striking and picturesque effect, second to no work of this early date. The windows above are round-headed and pointed; beneath them is a string-course ornamented with the chevron: a corbel-table above supports the eaves of the roof. In the chancel wall, on the same side, is the priests' door, with a sculptured circular head. The north side has a door opposite the grand entrance, but less ornamented, circular at top, but without a tympan; the windows on this side are all round-headed, connected by a plain string-course. One of the most curious features of the exterior are the recessed arches beneath the windows on the eastern side, and which are supposed to have been designed as places of sepulture for the founders of the church. After many years of dilapidation and neglect, this curious church has been put into a state of thorough repair by means of a public subscription. It is certainly the most interesting of the Kentish churches, and as a remarkable example of a richly-decorated village church of the Norman era, is a worthy study for the architect.

SIR ROBERT PEEL'S CONVERSAZIONE.

On Saturday last, Sir Robert Peel having issued cards for an inspection of his pictures, to several distinguished persons, and others eminent in the walks of literature and art, received a large number of visitors, at his house in Whitehall Gardens. The staircase and some of the rooms, have lately been re-decorated, as already mentioned in our pages, and the collection re-arranged. To the former we of course gave attention, and shall next week offer a remark upon the way in which the work has been done. The meeting was an exceedingly interesting one.

The Chinese House.—Dear Sir: in your notice of the Chinese house some time since,* I think you overlooked the purpose of the peculiar mode of lighting, which you describe as "wasteful." It appeared to me that this arrangement, by means of which the windows were deprived of an external view, was one of the manifestations of eastern jealousy, superior in effect to the *jalousies* which Christian suspicion had invented for the same object. This idea increased the interest which I took in the model.—I am, Sir, &c., A. A.

*See p. 186, *ante*.

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